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RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0446  
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 0001  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 1749  
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RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 7044

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001477

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CHINA REQUESTS RELIEF FROM JAPAN, WILL ALLOW  
MILITARY FLIGHTS

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Chinese government has asked Japan to send additional supplies, including blankets, tents and medicine, to help with earthquake relief efforts. According to an MOD official, Chinese officials have said that they will not seek or accept CH-47 helicopter support from Japan. Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura told the press on May 28 that China wanted the supplies delivered by SDF aircraft, but MOFA and MOD contacts emphasized to Embassy Tokyo that Beijing did not specify how the relief goods should be transported to China. Japan is leaning towards using Air Self-Defense Forces C-130's to transport the items, according to MOFA. This would mark the first time ever Japanese Self-Defense Force aircraft have operated in China. The details of any SDF airlift are still being worked out and Japan has not made a final decision to use ASDF C-130s to transport the supplies, according to MOFA contacts. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Chinese government has asked Japan to send disaster relief supplies, including tents, medicine, and blankets, and needs it delivered "as soon as possible," MOFA China Division Director Akiba told Embassy Tokyo on May 28. China also requested emergency lights, but this may be difficult to provide due to voltage differences.

¶3. (C) Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura on May 28 told the press that his understanding is that China "wants the tents, blankets, and other things to be carried by SDF aircraft." However, both MOFA and MOD told Embassy Tokyo that China made no such specific request for SDF transport of relief supplies. China does not care how the supplies are delivered, as long as they are delivered quickly, and the Chinese authorities did not place restrictions on how the goods should be transported, Akiba emphasized. While transporting the goods either by either charter aircraft or Japan Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) C-130's is under consideration, Japan is leaning towards taking advantage of this "historic moment" to use its C-130's, provided the relevant legal requirements are met, Akiba stated. Separately, MOFA China Division Deputy Director Shigemi Sugiwaru, who is seconded from MOD, told Embassy Tokyo on May 29 that Japan has not yet decided whether to use ASDF C-130s. He noted that the matter was still being discussed and emphasized that a lot of details still needed to be worked out.

¶4. (C) Ministry of Defense (MOD) SOFA Division Principal Deputy Director Ariyoshi also confirmed that China did not specifically ask Japan to dispatch ASDF aircraft to deliver

the goods and added that China also did not ask Japan for CH-47 helicopter support. While "the Chinese had heard about Japan's capabilities from Washington," they relayed to the Japanese that they would not ask for or accept CH-47s from Japan, he explained.

15. (C) The ASDF is prepared to deliver the relief supplies with C-130's if the transport mission meets the requirements of the Dispatch of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) law, Ministry of Defense International Operations Division Deputy Director Ara told Embassy Tokyo on March 28. This law provides the necessary legal basis for Japan to participate in overseas disaster relief operations and enabled the JSDF to participate in the 2004 tsunami relief efforts in Southeast Asia and in the 2005 Pakistan earthquake relief efforts.

16. (C) On the day of the earthquake, Japan provided China with a list of "goods and services" it could provide the Chinese, China Division Director Akiba said. Among these were the use of ASDF assets to transport goods, along with the rescue and medical teams which China has already accepted. "Frankly, we never imagined that China would accept the use of ASDF assets; this really means something," Akiba enthused.  
SCHIEFFER